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A PLEA FOR THE MILITIA.

BY TWO MILITIAMEN.

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AS Canadians, we are proud of our nationality. Our *amor patriæ* is not on the surface, and possibly requires the positive stimulus of a 'Trent Difficulty,' or the negative influence of a *Times* article, before its latent depths are stirred. But the national feeling exists. We are justly proud of our position as the first colony of the Empire, and of our commercial rank among the nations of the world. It is our boast that we have a commercial marine only surpassed in numbers and tonnage by four of the leading nations of the earth. We have a territory richer in vegetable and mineral wealth, and larger in area, than any of the kingdoms of Europe. We have a hardy and intelligent population, and the freest institutions on the face of the globe. How should we maintain those rights, protect our liberties, and retain our possessions, were Great Britain's naval and military assistance withheld or withdrawn? We have no navy to protect our ships; we have developed no sufficient military organization to

stand the crucial test of war; we have no manufactories for warlike material, and no internal resources for their immediate creation. We have not even arms and ammunition enough to supply a single army corps in the field and to organize its reserve, should hostilities commence now. Nothing could be done, therefore, without Britain's aid, save to submit peacefully to the first power that attempted forcible annexation.

Now, is this a condition that should be acquiesced in by a free people, accustomed to the exercise of the fullest civil and religious liberty? The merchant who will not insure his life against accident, or his property against fire, is blameworthy, should he suffer loss by these means. The nation which declines or neglects to protect its liberties in not providing for its defence by all means within its power, is equally reprehensible.

Contrast our position with that of some of the smaller European Powers:—

	Dominion of Canada.	Netherlands.	Switzerland.	Sweden.	Norway.	Denmark.	Greece.
Population	3,727,000	3,967,263	2,669,147	4,383,291	1,817,237	1,910,400	1,457,864
Area	3,580,310 sq. m.	13,680 sq. m.	15,991 sq. m.	171,750 sq. m.	122,280 sq. m.	15,504 sq. m.	19,941 sq. m.
Revenue	£4,500,000	£8,642,556	£1,580,040	£4,340,000	£2,177,200	£2,584,000	£1,386,971
Expenditure for military purposes ..	£200,000	£1,541,909	£586,237	£925,000		£1,114,000	£336,757
Army	none	61,947 men	84,369 } *50,069 }	7,885 131	12,750 peace 18,000 war	37,000	14,061
Navy { Ships ..	none	67			20	33	14
{ Guns ..		705	none	304	156	291	
{ Men ..		9,200 men		4,693	2,393	1,125	653
Militia	43,729	100,323 men	65,981	{ 29,940* 94,050 13,166	62,000*	32,393	24,000
			* Reserve.	* 3 classes.	* Reserve.		

From these figures it appears that, with a population almost equal, and a revenue half as large as the Netherlands, we spend less than one-seventh as much for military and naval purposes, and train for such services less than one-fourth the number of men. We have no ships of war; she has sixty-seven, some of first-class power; and yet her mercantile marine only numbers 1,835 vessels, of 526,527 tonnage, while we have 6,952 vessels, of 1,205,565 tons burden! Denmark, with about half our population and revenue, trains annually double the number of men that we do, and has a small and well appointed navy.

Another striking comparison may be made in the amount paid for military purpose per head of population annually in different countries. For example, in Great Britain the people are taxed \$6.86 per head per annum, in France \$4.50 per head, in Prussia \$2.20 per head, and in the United States (exclusive of the cost of the State Militia) \$1.39 per head, while in Canada we only burden ourselves with the trifling tax of 14 cents per head of our population for militia purposes. Certainly no Canadian would object to that tax being doubled or quadrupled.

It is not necessary to force these comparisons to an application. There are many circumstances which prevent a comparison with the states of Europe. It is merely to point the fact, that other nations having small populations and resources, do more to ensure their national rights and liberties than we do. And it is beyond the power of the most prophetic soul to say that our rights and liberties may not be invaded.

The question is, how are our means of defence to be developed at the least cost to a young and struggling people, both in the matter of money, and of time? There is only one way by which a defensive organization can be maintained, adequately and inexpensively, and that is by means of a militia. But many of our fellow-citizens are

accustomed to ask the question, 'Why expend money to support a militia that in peace is not required, and in war would be inadequate as a protection against invasion?' Let our history answer this question.

Barely twelve years after the struggle which terminated in the cession of Canada to the British, the arms of the rebellious American colonies were directed against Canada. At that time there were only about 500 British troops in the colony, but General Carleton embodied some 1,800 militia and garrisoned Quebec, defeating the attempt of the enemy to carry the fortress by storm on the 30th December, 1775, and holding it until the arrival of British reinforcements on the 6th May, 1776. All the country, west of Quebec, had been overrun by the Americans, and had not the militia proved loyal, in spite of the temptations offered them by the various proclamations of the American Generals, it is probable that, at the present time, Canada would have been one of the States of the Union. This time, therefore, the steady valour and loyalty of the Canadian militia, preserved Canada to the British Crown.

In 1812 the Americans attacked Canada with two corps, numbering 13,300 men. The British troops in the Province were but 4,500 strong, nearly 3,000 of whom were in garrison at Quebec and Montreal, only 1,500 being in Upper Canada. From the capture of Michilimacinae, the first blow of the campaign, down to its close, the militia took their share in every military operation. Of the force that captured Detroit with its garrison of 2,500 men, scarcely 300 were regular troops. Brock had but 1,200 men to oppose 6,300 Americans on the Niagara frontier, and more than half were militia; yet he confronted the enemy, and in the gallant action in which he lost his life, left an imperishable record of the steady valour with which Canadians can defend their country. At that time the population

of Upper Canada, capable of bearing arms, did not exceed 10,000 men, yet the Province supplied 5,455 officers and men as its contingent for service during the war.

In 1813, Canada was menaced by three separate armies, numbering over 30,000 men. The British force consisted of 13,000 regulars, and 15,000 militia, scattered over a frontier a thousand miles long. The Americans overran Upper Canada for a while, but by the end of the campaign had been driven across the border. At Chateauguay, Col. de Salaberry showed of what stuff our militia was made. The American force consisted of 7,000 infantry, 10 guns, and 250 cavalry. The Canadian force, under de Salaberry, was about 1,000 strong—nearly half of whom took no part in the battle—and yet he totally defeated and drove back a force eight times his strength. Of this action, General Sir James Carmichael Smyth says: 'The affair upon the Chateauguay River is remarkable as having been fought, on the British side, almost entirely by Canadians. The Republicans were repulsed by a very inferior number of Canadian militia, and of troops raised in Canada, thus affording a practical proof of the good disposition of the Canadians, and the possibility, to say nothing of the policy, of improving the Canadian militia, so as to be fully equal in discipline and instruction to any American troops that may be brought against them at any future opportunity.' He also says, 'Not a single Canadian militiaman was known to desert to the enemy, during the three years the war continued.' At the end of the war, the Americans had gained no foothold upon Canadian territory, and were forced to postpone that conquest of Canada, originally undertaken as 'a military promenade.' Yet at that time the entire population of Canada did not exceed 300,000, while that of the United States was over 8,000,000,—an odds of 27 to 1 against us. For the second time,

therefore, the efforts of the Canadian militia largely contributed to the preservation of Canada to the Crown.

During 1837, in Upper Canada alone, with a population of 450,000, there were 40,000 militia enrolled, in the expectation of a war being provoked by the action of the too active sympathisers with the Rebels. Of this number there were 16 battalions and 35 companies of cavalry, artillery, and riflemen, placed on active service, several of whom did military duty for some years afterward.

In 1862, when the 'Trent difficulty' rendered a war with the United States a matter of extreme probability, the alacrity with which the Canadian militia sprung to arms, resolving to abide by all consequences rather than that their dearly loved flag should be insulted with impunity, no doubt had its influence in securing the submission and apology that was made by the American Government.

In 1865, it became necessary, in order to restrain the Southerners resident in Canada from making our territory a basis for warlike operations, to place corps of observation at certain points on the frontier. These battalions were formed from the *élite* of our militia and they became, after a few months' duty, equal to any soldiery in the world. How could we at that time have sustained our International obligations, had we no militia?

From 1866 to 1870 came the Fenian raids. How serious would these small matters have become had we not had our militia ready to repel such attacks! Those who now cavil at the expense, and argue against the necessity of the Force, were in those days the first to recognize their usefulness, and to seek to place the militia between themselves and the enemy. In twenty-four hours from the call for active service, 33,754 militiamen had come forward, upwards of 8,000 in excess of the quota allowed by the Militia Act, and 13,000 more than had been on the

strength of companies in the preceding year.

In 1869, our militia took a part in the expedition to Red River, and, by their soldierlike qualities and cheerful endurance, won such high consideration from their gallant commander that in the wilds of Ashanti he wished for those two corps of Canadian militiamen, when the picked regiments of Imperial troops were at his disposal.

Since 1870, have not the Guibord riots and the 12th of July outrages in Montreal; the Grand Trunk riot at Belleville and elsewhere on the line; the pilgrimage riots in Toronto, and half a dozen other occasions in which military aid has been invoked to enforce the civil power, proved sufficiently the imperative necessity for the maintenance in our midst of a body of armed and disciplined militia, who regard their duty as soldiers first, and their prejudices and feelings last?

Suppose that we take it for granted that a militia is a necessary adjunct to Government, even in a country where the people have an hereditary respect for the majesty of the law. Upon what principle, and what detail, shall we render that constitutional force at once inexpensive and efficient? There are three ways afforded us by precedent. First, the old feudal system, making the land, through its owners, responsible for the forthcoming of a certain force. This was the system in Canada prior to the conquest, and which, singularly enough, was engrafted upon British law by the Quebec Act. Second—the *ballot*, which is the law of this country, though suspended in its operation by the present system of voluntary enlistment.

The nearest approach to our system as defined by law, is that in force in Denmark, which is based upon the liability of all able-bodied men to serve, but adopts the ballot as a practice. Let us glance at its working and results.

Every male subject, at the age of 22, has to assemble in his military district for the purpose of conscription. They are then sorted for the various arms—the smallest or weakest never being called upon for duty in time of peace, and the physically incapable being rejected altogether. About 40 per company are selected for active service, and are, to all intents and purposes, regular soldiers for sixteen months, and after that time are incorporated with those men of their year, not called upon for service, as a *reserve*, to be called upon in case of need. These reserves are formed into battalions, of which it will be seen forty per cent are drilled men. When a man has been in the reserve for ten years, he goes into the *second reserve*, and is not called upon for duty, unless the first reserve is drained by war. Officers obtain commissions only upon examination, and are promoted by seniority,—promotions in the Artillery and Engineers being based upon the number of marks gained by those who are entitled to compete, and appointments being made to the Staff from those who pass the best examinations. In some cases, however, these promotions are made by merit. Non-commissioned officers above the rank of corporals enlist for eight years, after which time they are entirely exempt from military service. Corporals are selected from among the recruits of the year, and are kept on duty for two years, by which time the new non-commissioned officers are fairly able for duty.

The Danish army is composed of:

Cavalry—1 Regiment Life Guards.
 “ 1 “ Hussars.
 “ 4 “ Dragoons.
 Artillery—30 Batteries (8 guns each.)
 Engineers—18 Companies.
 Infantry—1 Battalion Life Guards.
 “ 22 Battalions (4 Companies each.)

Or a total of 37,000 of all ranks.

The *third* system is that wherein the

entire male population takes it in turn to serve, as in Switzerland, a country which has for centuries presented the edifying spectacle of a nation determined to be independent, but never to interfere with its neighbours—an example it would be well for us to follow.

With exception of the clergy and certain civil functionaries, every Swiss is a soldier. From the age of 19 to that of 44 he may be at any time called upon for military service. But practically a man passes into the reserve or *Landwehr*, at about 28 to 30, serving his time in the *élite* or first line, before that age. As soon as a youth attains the age of 19 he is attached to a battalion in his canton and there undergoes 28 days' drill for the first year, and eight days' drill in the succeeding years. If he is suitable he is placed in the engineers or artillery, and then undergoes 42 days' training for the first and 14 days in the succeeding years. Riflemen are trained for 35 days the first, and 14 the following years.

Staff officers are obliged to pass through the military school at Thun, as are also the officers of engineers and artillery. Regimental staff officers also pass examinations on promotion. The military college at Thun is self-sustaining.

The *élite* or first line, numbers 84,369 of all ranks, the *reserve* or second line 50,069, of all ranks, and the *Landwehr* or third line, 65,981 of all ranks; the first two (in round numbers 140,000 men) being armed and equipped.

Thus we see what can be accomplished in the way of defensive organization, by smaller nations, with lesser revenues than our own. What are we to do towards the same end? No hurried extension of our present system is necessary or would be prudent. Armies are not made in a day, nor can a military system be perfected in a year. *But the framework must be built in time of peace, upon such solid foundations that*

it will neither shrink nor give way under the pressure of war. Therefore we appeal to our legislators, and to our countrymen at large, to give the matter serious and instant consideration. To have an efficient militia, sufficient funds must be provided to carry on the work regularly. It will not do to spend two millions in one year, and half a million in the next. The vote should be a standing sum, and not subject to legislative caprice, or cheese-paring administration. Let the country decide, once for all, what it can afford to spend annually for defensive purposes, and then hold those persons responsible for its proper expenditure, who are also responsible for the efficiency of the Force.

It is difficult to understand on what grounds the successive Governments have been so parsimonious in reference to militia expenditure. There is no item in the Public Accounts less grudged by the masses of the people than that devoted to the support of the militia; there is no outlay that is distributed so evenly over the country—and there is little doubt but that any Government would be liberally supported in a generous policy towards the force.

Members of Parliament have said that the country would not submit to an increased expenditure for militia purposes. This is either founded on ignorance of the real feelings of the Canadian people, or is but a shallow pretence. Have we not seen year after year Municipal Councils all over the country voting large sums to their local volunteer corps to supplement the Government Grants? Do not the Municipalities meet the Government half way and build handsome drill sheds, of which they pay a large portion of the cost? The municipal bodies are not bound to expend these sums, it is no part of their duty any more than that they should give grants to the customs and the post office, or for the erection of light-houses. This liberality is the most conclusive proof that

the people are even more advanced than their rulers, and that they feel that Parliament and Government do not do their full duty in reference to the defensive organization of the State. It is absurd for our legislators to excuse themselves from not voting sufficient sums to the militia on the ground that popular feeling is against it. There is no doubt that the people will stand by the Parliament in any steps taken in this direction.

The drill pay given to the militia finds its way into every nook of the Dominion—on almost every concession and side line can be found one or more members of the force—while every town and almost every village is the headquarters of a company, in which the inhabitants take a deep interest, of whose appearance they are proud, and in which their finest young men are enrolled. Our politicians have never yet fully appreciated how deep a hold the militia organization has taken upon the hearts of the people of this country. It is the most popular organization, and it has the advantage of being neither religious, sectarian or political, but purely national and patriotic. It is the only common ground upon which all can unite—where Catholic and Protestant, Conservative and Liberal, can vie with each other in giving our Dominion that military strength which is so important an element of national greatness.

For these reasons our statesmen should devote special pains to foster in every way an organization which tends to weld the nation together, to cultivate a national and patriotic spirit, and to make the whole nation defensively warlike, and confident in the future of the State.

Unfortunately our politicians look at questions solely from party standpoints, and are little influenced by national considerations; consequently when the expenditure is to be reduced the first thing to suffer is the militia. The reduction does not affect the staff

—which is maintained at the same strength, although the force is reduced by one-half—but the whole burden falls upon the men of the force, their numbers are cut down, their pay reduced, their camps dispensed with, and the *morale* of the force thereby greatly diminished, and the efficiency seriously impaired.

Is this reduction necessary? Is it advisable even upon purely financial grounds? It must not be overlooked that we are contending against the reduction of drill pay, etc., for the active force only, for there has been little or no reduction in the cost of the machinery by which the force is governed. Now, the drill pay of officers and men goes directly into the hands of the tax-payers themselves. There is scarcely a family in Canada that has not some relative in the force, and the trifling sums paid in this way go back into the country households, and in many and many a township is the only Government money ever seen, and is, in fact, the only return they ever seem to get for their taxes. There may be a fallacy in this, but they believe it, notwithstanding.

It is sometimes urged that the labour is lost to the country while the men are at drill. This may be right in theory, but it is a mistake in reality. The drills are performed at night, or in the month of June—between haying and harvest—and practically do not cause one grain of wheat less to be sown, or one bushel less to be reaped, while the country has the added strength of a trained and effective military organization.

Some argue that the militia force is not as efficient as a regular army would be, and that, therefore, the money spent upon the organization is wasted. Granted that a regular force would be more efficient, but a Canadian regular army would needs be very small and disproportionately costly. The Mounted Police, 300 in number, cost for last year \$305,749.05. The annual drill pay for the whole number of militia

trained last year was \$124,267.95, or little more than a third of the cost of the Mounted Police. Again A and B Batteries Dominion Artillery, about 250 men, cost \$109,691.35, or $\frac{1}{3}$ as much as the entire militia were paid for drill. Will any one in his senses claim that there would be as much military strength in a regular force of 250 or 300 men, as in a militia numbering 45,000?

It is also a mistake to consider that the whole value of the present force consists in the high state of drill in which it is, or should be kept. If we have not absolute efficiency, we have, as a starting point, the organization, the arms, and the equipment—the officers fairly efficient, and the rough edge taken off the men. War would not probably come at a day's notice, and every day after our men were mobilized, they would gain in steadiness. Had we not our present organization, or were it abolished for ten years, six months of the greatest efforts would not do as much to bring the force to an efficient state, as six weeks would do under the present circumstances.

A great advantage is also realized in the military spirit created in the country. A present almost every young man serves for a longer or shorter period in the ranks of the militia. Many people think that, because they leave the force before they are thoroughly efficient as soldiers, their service is wasted and their training useless. There can be no greater mistake. When a lad of 18 or 20 has donned the uniform and shouldered the rifle, and drilled even for one year, a great deal has been done. The idea that he is a Canadian—that he may some day be called upon to defend his country—has entered his mind, and as long as he lives thereafter he will be a better citizen. Twenty years after, if war should break out, his first thought would be 'My country is in danger, I must shoulder my rifle again and go to the front;' while, if he had never

been in the force, he would probably say, 'There will be war, and I am afraid our militia will have more than they can do to defend the country,' but he will not think of enlisting to help them. Perhaps, like a craven, he might say, 'The odds are too great, we should not provoke the enemy by resistance.' From this point of view alone, the militia organization is of immense service to the country.

Canadians have the historical reputation of being defensively the most warlike people in the world, and it should be the part of our legislators to cultivate and encourage that feeling. Like Switzerland, we will never be aggressive, but who shall say that we may not have to fight desperately for our separate existence as a nation in the future, as we have done in the past. Already the muttered thunder from the East has reached our ears—why may not the gathering storm reach and devastate our shores? Can we reconcile it with our duty as loyal subjects and good citizens, that we should neglect those measures which may be necessary in order to preserve our national existence; or are we to be 'like dumb driven cattle' instead of 'heroes in the strife?' When the exigency arises it will be too late for precautionary measures. It is necessary to prepare for war in time of peace.

But it is to be feared that persuasions and warnings alike fall upon heedless ears. Because the militia force is not a political organization; because they have wisely and rightly held aloof from politics, they are ignored by our politicians. But though abstaining from taking an active part in politics, the militia has, and can exercise, an important influence in elections. In 1872, Sir George Cartier, the then Minister of Militia, was defeated in Montreal, because the volunteers and their friends voted '*en masse*' against him. In this last election the general dissatisfaction of the Force was doubtless one of the causes of the striking defeat of the

Mackenzie Government. Let us then appeal, upon purely selfish grounds, for the influence and support of our members of Parliament, in order that the Government of the day may treat liberally the most popular and influential of our national organizations.

To the people we must also appeal, to conquer that apathy with which they have viewed our past struggles for existence. Do they realize that if the present Force is discouraged to death, the law provides for the establishment of the ballot, and that employers, instead of employés, may be forced into the ranks? Do they realize that each young man who goes out to drill, in every year, sacrifices from \$8 to \$10 for their direct benefit, and without reaping any specific advantage therefor? Do they realize the protection that the presence of the Force affords their property and their

lives? What would have stayed the pilgrimage riots in Toronto save the presence of an armed force? What would have stayed the sacking of Montreal, had no volunteers been at hand on the 12th July?

Our desires are most reasonable. We only ask that the provisions of the Militia Law should be slightly amended and rigidly enforced, and that a little more money should be spent in the annual training of the men. All that is wanted, in addition, is that the Canadian people should take a living interest and pride in their citizen soldiery; encourage them by precept and example, and stimulate, rather than retard, their efforts to fulfil their duty. Give the militiaman the *locus standi* that he deserves to have in the community, and the community will reap the reward in the hour of danger.